

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 12, 2016

FACT SHEET: President Obama to Designate New National Monuments in the California Desert

On Friday, President Obama will designate three new national monuments in the California desert, encompassing nearly 1.8 million acres of America's public lands. Building on the Administration's commitment to protect our land and water for future generations, today's designations will nearly double the number of acres of public lands previously protected as national monuments by President Obama---demonstrating the Administration's strong commitment to aggressive action to protect the environment for future generations.

In addition to permanently protecting incredible natural resources, wildlife habitat and unique historic and cultural sites, and providing recreational opportunities for a burgeoning region, the monuments will support climate resiliency in the region and further advance the President's unprecedented work to address climate change. The new monuments will link already protected lands, including Joshua Tree National Park, Mojave National Preserve, and fifteen congressionally-designated Wilderness areas, permanently protecting key wildlife corridors and providing plants and animals with the space and elevation range that they will need in order to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

The new monuments are Mojave Trails National Monument, Sand to Snow National Monument and Castle Mountains National Monument in southern California.

- **Mojave Trails National Monument:** Spanning 1.6 million acres, more than 350,000 acres of previously congressionally-designated Wilderness, the Mojave Trails National Monument is comprised of a stunning mosaic of rugged mountain ranges, ancient lava flows, and spectacular sand dunes. The monument will protect irreplaceable historic resources including ancient Native American trading routes, World War II-era training camps, and the longest remaining undeveloped stretch of Route 66. Additionally, the area has been a focus of study and research for decades, including geological research and ecological studies on the effects of climate change and land management practices on ecological communities and wildlife.
- **Sand to Snow National Monument:** Encompassing 154,000 acres, including just over 100,000 acres of already congressionally-designated Wilderness, Sand to Snow National Monument is an ecological and cultural treasure and one of the most biodiverse areas in southern California, supporting more than 240 species of birds and twelve threatened and endangered wildlife species. Home to the region's tallest alpine mountain that rises from the floor of the Sonoran desert, the monument also will protect sacred, archaeological and cultural sites, including an estimated 1,700 Native American petroglyphs. Featuring thirty miles of the world famous Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, the area is a favorite for camping, hiking, hunting, horseback riding, photography, wildlife viewing, and even skiing.
- **Castle Mountains National Monument:** The Castle Mountains National Monument is an integral piece of the Mojave Desert with important natural resources and historic sites, including Native American archeological sites. The 20,920-acre monument will serve as a critical connection between two mountain ranges, protecting water resources, plants, and wildlife such as golden eagles, bighorn sheep, mountain lions and bobcats.

Following decades of local input and leadership from Senator Dianne Feinstein, today's designation's will enhance the region's economic activity by attracting visitors, increasing tourism, and ensuring public access for hiking, camping, hunting, fishing, rock climbing and other outdoor recreation activities for generations to

come. Permanent protection for the three new national monuments is strongly supported by local governments, tribes, business groups, elected officials, community leaders, and a variety of stakeholders including faith leaders, sportsmen, historians, conservationists and others. Additionally, the designations complement an ongoing planning process for renewable energy development on public lands in the California desert and furthers the longstanding work with public land managers and local communities to protect these lands for future generations.

In addition to protecting more land and water than any Administration in history – more than 265 million acres – the President has sought to ensure that all Americans and future generations have the opportunity to experience the natural and cultural richness of our national parks, monuments, forests and other public lands. Nearly a year ago, the President announced the launch of the Every Kid in a Park program to give every 4th grader in America free access to visit the country's unparalleled public lands, and over the course of the next year, the Administration will continue to encourage all Americans to “find your park” and experience firsthand the wonder of America's great outdoors. Moreover, the Administration is working to galvanize public and private support to achieve the goals of Every Kid in a Park and boost additional efforts to connect more underserved youth with nature.

Inspired by the Administration's commitment to connecting more young Americans to the outdoors and by the President's trip to Alaska last summer, IslandWood, the Sierra Club, the Children & Nature Network's Natural Leaders, and action sports retailer Zumiez are today announcing a new project called "Fresh Tracks." Their independent project will provide two dozen youth from underserved Los Angeles and Alaska Native communities with opportunities to travel together to both areas and explore diverse cultures and outdoors over a three-week period in August. Their project is particularly focused on working with communities responding to the My Brother's Keeper Community Challenge, a call to action by President Obama for cities, Tribal Nations, towns, and counties to build and execute robust cradle-to-college-and-career plans to ensure that all young people – no matter who they are or where they come from – can achieve their full potential. The President's actions today are protecting important public lands, and efforts like Fresh Tracks and Every Kid in a Park will work to ensure that our country's youth are able to visit and enjoy these types of cultural and natural areas.

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